

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 09578 01 OF 02 281156Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----121121 281204Z /46
O 280951Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4477
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE
47QMZNUSMISSION SINAI 1020

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 9578

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (FOR TEXT)

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, IS, LE
SUBJECT SOUTH LEBANON: MOVEMENT OF LEBANESE TROOPS

REFS: (A) STATE 189490, (B) TEL AVIV 9519, (C) BEIRUT 4263,
(D) STATE 189996, (E) TEL AVIV 9485, (F) STATE 190608
(G) JERUSALEM 2038, (H) STATE 190609

1. SUMMARY: WEIZMAN HAS LISTENED TO ALL THE ARGUMENTS FOR
AN ILMAC MEETING TODAY (JULY 28) AND AN LAF MOVEMENT SOUTH
ON SUNDAY (JULY 30), BUT REJECTS THEM, INSISTING THAT HE
MUST HAVE TIME TO CONSULT ON THE MOVEMENT AND THE ROUTE WITH
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HIS COMMANDERS AND WITH HADDAD AND COMPANY IF THERE IS TO
BE ANY CHANCE OF SUCCESS. HE THUS TURNED DOWN AN ILMAC MEETING
TODAY BUT SAYS THAT ONE CAN BE HELD EARLY SUNDAY. HE
AND THE ISRAELI CHIEF OF STAFF HAVE SEVERE RESERVATIONS
ABOUT THE PROPOSED ROUTE. WEIZMAN'S CONCERN OVER THE
HANDLING OF HADDAD CONTINUES UNABATED. END SUMMARY

2. I MET WITH WEIZMAN AT 0815 AUGUST 28 TO CARRY OUT INSTRUCTIONS REF A. I INFORMED HIM THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT HAD ARRIVED AT THE DECISION TO MOVE ONE BATTALION OF THE FIRST BRIGADE TO POSITIONS SOUTH OF THE LITANI IN THE UNIFIL AREA AND THAT THEY MIGHT WANT TO COMMENCE THIS MOVE AS EARLY AS SUNDAY, JULY 30. DRAWING HEAVILY UPON THE POINTS PASSED TO BENTSUR BY DRAPER (REF H) AND UPON THE ARGUMENTS PRESENTED BY AMBASSADOR LEONARD (REF E), I STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPOSED ILMAC MEETING (REF G), THE LEBANESE DECISION TO MOVE, AND THE MOVE ITSELF. I EMPHASIZED THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN STRUGGLING TO MAKE THIS DECISION TO MOVE FOR A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD OF TIME AND THAT STRONG OPPOSITION IN THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN OVERCOME BUT THE SITUATION IS STILL DICEY AND THUS THE QUICKER THE MOVE CAN BE MADE, THE BETTER. WEIZMAN'S INITIAL AND IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO MY DESCRIPTION OF THE INTENDED ROUTE OF MOVEMENT WAS "WHY CANT THEY FIND A DIFFERENT WAY TO GET TO TIBNIN -- FOR EXAMPLE, THROUGH NABITIYYA." I EXPLAINED IN SOME DETAIL THAT WHILE THE SYRIANS HAD INDICATED THEY COULD CONTROL THE ROUTE DOWN THE BAKKA, THUS HOPEFULLY NEUTRALIZING THE PALESTINIAN THREAT IN THAT AREA, NO SUCH ARRANGEMENT COULD BE MADE FOR A MOVE THROUGH PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS ON A HABITIYYA ROUTE. WEIZMAN APPEARED TO AGREE, RELUCTANTLY AND SOMEWHAT SCORNFULLY, TO THIS OBVIOUS THREAT WHEN CONSIDERING A NABITIYYA ROUTE. HE DESPATCHED HIS EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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(TEHILA) AT THIS POINT AND INSTRUCTED HIM TO IMMEDIATELY DISCUSS BOTH THE ROUTE AND THE PROPOSED ILMAC MEETING OF TODAY (JULY 28) WITH CHIEF OF STAFF EITAN. WHILE TEHILA WAS OUT OF THE ROOM, WEIZMAN AGAIN FOCUSED ON THE PROBLEM OF THE ROUTE THROUGH THE HADDAD AREA AND DISPLAYED HIS IRRITATION WITH THE QUICK FUSE LEBANESE CALL FOR A JULY 28 MEETING WHICH WAS TRANSMITTED TO HIM ONLY YESTERDAY AFTERNOON (JULY 27). I EXPLAINED THAT AT THE LAST ILMAC MEETING, THE ISRAELI REP HAD ASKED FOR 24-HOURS NOTICE PRIOR TO ANY MOVEMENT SOUTH BY THE LAF AND BY CALLING FOR THE MEETING TODAY THE GOL WAS ACTUALLY TRYING TO GIVE 48-HOURS NOTICE OF THE MOVE. WEIZMAN'S RESPONSE WAS THAT THE PROPOSED ROUTE OF MOVEMENT PRESENTED PROBLEMS WHICH MUST BE DISCUSSED WITH HIS OWN SENIOR MILITARY STAFF AS WELL AS WITH HADDAD, SHIDDIAC AND THE MILITIAS. HE INSISTED THAT TO BE ASSURED OF A SMOOTH SUCCESSFUL DEPLOYMENT THE PROPOSED ROUTE NEEDED TO BE PROPERLY CONSIDERED AND PERHAPS ACCEPTED BY ALL CONCERNED, INCLUDING HADDAD. HE NEEDED MORE TIME TO ASSURE COOPERATION. I URGED THAT HE GO AHEAD WITH THE MEETING TODAY IN ORDER TO ALLOW THE LEBANESE TO DIRECTLY PRESENT THEIR PLAN AND TO AT LEAST START THE DISCUSSIONS

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AMEMBASSY LONDON
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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 9578

EXDIS

ABOUT THE USE OF THE BAKKA ROUTE AND TO SEE IF A MOVE ON SUNDAY IS PRACTICAL. WEIZMAN SAID THAT IF HE WERE PUSHED TO HAVE A MEETING TODAY WITHOUT DELIBERATE CONSULTATIONS IT WOULD BE "VERY LIKELY WE WOULD SAY NO TO A MOVE ON SUNDAY." I AGAIN URGED THAT HE CONDUCT THE MEETING TODAY AND AT THAT MEETING EXPLAIN TO THE LEBANESE HOW IMPORTANT IT IS THAT THE ISRAELIS TALK WITH HADDAD IN ORDER TO ENSURE A SAFE AND ORDERLY MOVE. AT THIS POINT TEHILA RETURNED WITH A NOTE FROM THE CHIEF OF STAFF WHICH IN EFFECT REPEATED WEIZMAN'S PREVIOUS ARGUMENT -- EITAN'S INITIAL REACTION TO THE PROPOSED ROUTE WAS NEGATIVE AND HE ALSO FEELS THAT A MEETING TODAY IS RUSHING CONSIDERATION AND WOULD NOT PROVE TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

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3. WEIZMAN THEN PRESENTED ME WITH A DECISION. THE MEETING CANNOT BE HELD TODAY BUT CAN BE HELD SUNDAY, JULY 30, AS EARLY AS 0900 IN THE MORNING. HE SAID THAT HE COULD NOT BE "RUSHED BY THE GOOD INTENTIONS OF THE LEBANESE ONLY TO HAVE HADDAD GO OFF HIS HEAD." HE INSISTED THAT HE NEEDED TIME TO DISCUSS THE ENTIRE SITUATION WITH "MY OWN HENCHMEN" AND WITH HADDAD, SHIDDIAC AND THE MILITIAS. HE REMINDED ME THAT HADDAD HIMSELF IS A PROUD MAN AND REALLY DOESN'T LIKE VERY MUCH TAKING ORDERS FROM THE ISRAELIS. EVEN THOUGH IT IS UNLIKELY THAT HADDAD WOULD START SHOOTING AT LAF FORCES, HE SAID THAT THE PROPOSED ROUTE SHOULD BE THOROUGHLY CONSIDERED PRIOR TO A MEETING, AND THAT ONCE HE GIVES US HIS WORD THAT THE MOVE IS ACCEPTABLE, HE WANTS TO BE ABLE TO STAND BEHIND WHAT HE TELLS US. HE EMPHASIZED THAT HE IS NOT TRYING TO BE AN OBSTRUCTIONIST BY DELAYING THE MEETING UNTIL SUNDAY.

4. TWICE DURING THE CONVERSATION WEIZMAN REFERRED TO THE TREATMENT OF HADDAD AND DESCRIBED ONE OF HIS MAJOR PROBLEMS AS BEING "I DON'T WANT TO SEE HADDAD DANGLING FROM A TREE." I TOLD HIM THAT ALTHOUGH WE DID NOT HAVE THE DETAILS, WE UNDERSTOOD THAT A PRAGMATIC "LEBANESE ARRANGEMENT" WAS BEING WORKED OUT FOR HADDAD AND INDEED FOR SHIDDIAC AS WELL. I EMPHASIZED THAT HADDAD WAS NOT GOING TO BE PUNISHED AND SUGGESTED THAT ISRAEL ASK FOR THE DETAILS OF ANY ARRANGEMENT AT THE ILMAC MEETING.

5. COMMENT: WEIZMAN APPROACHED THIS PROBLEM WITH REALISM AND CALM CONSIDERATION. I BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSED MOVE WILL HAVE A BETTER CHANCE IF WEIZMAN IS GIVEN THE TIME TO NOT ONLY CONSULT WITH HIS COMMANDERS AND HADDAD AND COMPANY BUT TO PERSUADE THEM AS WELL AS I THINK HE WILL TRY TO DO. I RECOMMEND THAT AMBASSADOR PARKER EX-

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PLAIN THIS SITUATION VERY CAREFULLY TO THE GOL AND TELL THEM THAT THIS DOES NOT APPEAR TO US TO BE AN ISRAELI ATTEMPT TO STALL THE MOVEMENT. WEIZMAN IS WELL AWARE OF THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH HAVE BEEN OVERCOME IN ARRIVING AT THE DECISION TO MOVE AND HE APPEARS TO BE TRYING TO BE HELPFUL IN DELAYING THE MEETING EVEN THOUGH IT MAY NOT INITIALLY SEEM THAT WAY TO THE GOL. ONE TOUGH QUESTION THAT WEIZMAN DID NOT ASK AT THIS TIME, BUT THAT WE THINK MAY COME UP LATER, IS JUST HOW THE SYRIANS INTEND TO SECURE THE ROUTE BETWEEN KFAR MISHKI AND KAWKABA. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO US IF WE COULD BE PROVIDED WITH ANY INFORMATION ON THIS FOR BOTH OUR OWN BACKGROUND AND FOR POSSIBLE USE IF HE ASKS THE QUESTION. AS FAR AS HADDAD IS CONCERNED, I STILL HOLD WITH MY POSITION IN TEL AVIV 9519. BOTH THE

ISRAELIS AND HADDAD ARE GOING TO VIEW ANY PROPOSED ARRANGEMENT WITH GREAT SKEPTICISM AND I BELIEVE THAT VERY DELIBERATE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE GOL AND HADDAD WILL BE REQUIRED PRIOR TO SENDING HIM ABROAD. 6. HAVE JUST RECEIVED BEIRUT 4269 WHICH INDICATES THAT GOL IS WILLING TO ACCEPT DELAY OF MEETING UNTIL SUNDAY MORNING. THIS TIMING APPEARS TO ME TO BE GOOD AND SHOULD ALLOW WEIZMAN TO CONDUCT THE CONSULTATIONS REFERRED TO ABOVE. HOPEFULLY WE WILL SEE MOVEMENT NEXT WEEK. MY ESTIMATE IS THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL PREFER WEDNESDAY TO MONDAY. LEWIS

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